

Botanical Illustrations Available for Sponsorship



Sprengelia incarnata, watercolour drawing and hand-coloured plate, 1815

This watercolour is by Sydenham Edwards. Here it is shown beside completed printed plate that appeared in volume 41 of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 1815. The plant depicted is native to south eastern Australia and New Zealand and had only arrived in Britain in 1793.



Erica lawsonii, watercolour drawing and hand-coloured plate, 1815

The name *Erica* has been associated with the genus since at least the first century CE, when Pliny the Elder is thought to have adapted the earlier Greek name ‘έρεικη’ into Latin. *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* tells us that this attractive species came from the Cape, and flowers between May and July.



Psoralea aphylla, watercolour drawing and hand-coloured plate, 1815

The name of this shrub gives us a clue to its characteristics; the epithet *aphylla* means 'leafless' in Latin, although *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* informs us that this is only the case in the mature plant. In 1815, when this plate was published, the species had already been in England for 125 years, having been cultivated in the royal garden at Hampton Court in 1690.



Cestrum fastigiatum, watercolour drawing and hand-coloured plate, 1815

Now recognised as *Cestrum diurnum*, this species is native to the Caribbean and Mexico. It is not unusual for the epithet to change, or in some cases, for a species to be reattributed to another genus as botanical knowledge expounds.



Canna flaccida, painted by a Chinese artist, late 18th or early 19th century

This painting, by an unidentified Chinese artist, formed part of a collection by Kew's first Director, William Jackson Hooker, and was probably sent to him by a correspondent stationed in China in the mid-1800s.

It is interesting to consider that although native in the south-east region of the United States, this specimen of *Canna flaccida* was painted in China. Further research is required to decide when and how the species was arrived in China, but it is not widely found in the region today.



Chrysanthemum sinense, painted by a Chinese artist, late 18th or early 19th century

This painting, by an unidentified Chinese artist, formed part of a collection by Kew's first Director, William Jackson Hooker, and was probably sent to him by a correspondent stationed in China in the mid-1800s. During the period that this illustration was made, European visitors to China were restricted in where they could travel, and their activities were restricted to a small area of Canton, modern day Guangzhou. The use of illustrations to record how a living specimen looked was essential in an age when so many plants did not survive the long sea voyage.

Chrysanthemums were cultivated in China as early as the 15th century BCE, and with plum blossom, orchid, and bamboo, are one of the 'Four Noble Plants' of Chinese culture.



Asclepias curassavica, painted by a Chinese artist, late 18th or early 19th century

This painting, by an unidentified Chinese artist, formed part of a collection by Kew's first Director, William Jackson Hooker, and was probably sent to him by a correspondent stationed in China in the mid-1800s.

Asclepias curassavica is an ornamental evergreen shrub that has been used both as a medicine and a poison. It is interesting that although native to Mexico and Tropical America, it was clearly being cultivated in China by the early 1800s.



Unidentified specimen, possibly from the family Annonaceae, painted by a Chinese artist, late 18th or early 19th century

This painting, by an unidentified Chinese artist, formed part of a collection by Kew's first Director, William Jackson Hooker, and was probably sent to him by a correspondent stationed in China in the mid-1800s.